



Security Council

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Letter dated 30 July 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Please find attached the report on the work of the Security Council during the presidency of the Republic of Lithuania in May 2015 (see annex). This document was prepared under my supervision, after consultation with the other members of the Council.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Raimonda **Murmokaitė**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 30 July 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Lithuania (May 2015)

Introduction

Under the presidency of the Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations, Raimonda Murmokaitė, in May 2015, the Security Council held a total of 17 meetings, including two open debates, two debates, nine briefings, 15 consultations, one private meeting, and two informal interactive dialogues. A number of issues, including on accountability in Burundi, and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Myanmar, and the Middle East (Syrian Arab Republic) and South Sudan, were addressed at length under "Other matters". The Council adopted four resolutions and one presidential statement, and issued 11 statements to the press.

During the reporting period, the Council held an open debate on the human costs of the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons and an open debate on the protection of journalists in conflict situations, which was chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, Linas Linkevičius. The Council also held a briefing on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations (European Union), with the participation of the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini. Further, the Council held a briefing at the Ministerial level on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts, which was also chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania.

Africa

Burundi

On 8 May, the Security Council held closed consultations on the situation in Burundi. The Council was briefed by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, Said Djinnit, on the tense security situation in Bujumbura. The members of the Council received an update on the dialogue, organized on 5 May by the Ministry of Interior and supported by the United Nations Electoral Observation Mission in Burundi (MENUB), which brought together various stakeholders, including two former Presidents of Burundi. Mr. Djinnit also updated the Council on the visit to Bujumbura on 6 May by the Foreign Ministers of the States members of the East African Community and the extraordinary summit of the East African Community on Burundi, planned to be held on 31 May in Dar-es-Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania. He noted that the nomination by the ruling party of President Pierre Nkurunziza as a candidate for a third term in office had been a major dividing issue among stakeholders.

In the statement released to the press following the consultations, Council members stressed their concern about the ongoing unrest and escalation of violence in Burundi and the increasing number of refugees in neighbouring States. The

members of the Council called on all parties to prioritize peace and stability in Burundi through political dialogue and stressed the need to hold a credible, transparent, inclusive and peaceful electoral process. They also expressed their full support to Mr. Djinnit and MENUB for their mediation efforts and welcomed the engagement of the African Union, the East African Community and the International Conference for the Great Lakes Region.

On 14 May, Mr. Djinnit briefed the Council in closed consultations on further developments in Burundi. He informed that President Nkurunziza had been deposed and that his Government had been dissolved by General Godefroid Niyombare. He observed that the situation in Burundi had deteriorated drastically since the most recent briefing, on 8 May, with the number of refugees from Burundi to neighbouring countries exceeding 100,000. Mr. Djinnit informed the Council about his efforts to engage all stakeholders, including Government officials, the Army Chief of Staff and General Niyombare. He also briefed the Council about the East African Community Summit held on 13 May in Dar-es-Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, which the President of Burundi had not been able to attend. The summit had condemned the coup and called for the return to constitutional order and postponement of the elections for a period not exceeding the mandate of the current Government.

Following the consultations, the members of the Council, in a statement released to the press, condemned the violent unrest in Burundi and both those who had perpetrated violence against civilians and those who had sought to seize power by unlawful means. Council members called on all parties to prioritize the restoration of peace and stability, return swiftly to the rule of law and hold credible elections in the spirit of the Arusha Agreement. They also reiterated their full support for the efforts of Mr. Djinnit and those of regional organizations and expressed their intent to respond to violent acts that threaten peace and security in Burundi.

On 15 May, the members of the Council, in a statement to the press, expressed serious concern over the ongoing tensions in Burundi and stressed the urgent need for dialogue and reconciliation among all Burundians. Council members called on all parties to show restraint, specifically condemned those who facilitated violence of any kind, and called on the Burundian authorities to address the crisis. Council members also called for the swift return of the rule of law and the holding of peaceful, transparent, inclusive and credible elections. They also expressed their intent to respond to acts of violence which threaten peace and security in Burundi. Council members also reiterated their full support for the efforts of Mr. Djinnit and those of regional organizations and expressed their intent to respond to violent acts that threaten peace and security in Burundi.

In its follow-up statement to the press of 24 May, Council members condemned in the strongest terms the killing in Burundi on 23 May of Zedi Feruzi, leader of the opposition Zigamibanga party, Union pour la paix et le développement, and his bodyguard. They also condemned the grenade attack on 22 May in the central market of Bujumbura, which left two dead and many others injured. Council members urged the Burundian authorities to swiftly bring the perpetrators of those crimes to justice and called on all stakeholders to demonstrate their sense of responsibility and to exercise calm and restraint.

In closed consultations on 27 May, the Council was briefed by Mr. Djinnit on the latest developments in Burundi. The Special Envoy described the situation as tense, with almost daily violent protests in Bujumbura, and spreading to other areas, which had resulted in the deaths of approximately 40 persons, including that of Zedi Feruzi. Mr. Djinnit informed that the search for a political solution on the issue of the constitutional elections had continued despite divisions among political parties on other matters. He also stressed the critical role of regional actors in addressing the political crisis. The Special Envoy expressed his hope that the upcoming East African Community Summit, planned for 31 May, would provide some guidance, including on the presidential term.

Council members condemned the killing of Mr. Feruzi and called for a thorough investigation. They stressed the importance of de-escalating the situation. Council members also stressed the role of the Special Envoy, and that of regional actors. Many members of the Council were of the view that the current situation did not allow for the holding of free and fair elections. Several delegations referred to the ruling of the Constitutional Court of Burundi regarding the participation of Mr. Nkurunziza in the presidential election.

Central African Republic

On 15 May, the Security Council, in a statement to the press, welcomed the holding in Bangui, from 4 to 11 May 2015, of the National Forum on reconciliation and the inclusive grass-roots level consultations. The members of the Council commended the adoption of the Republican Pact for Peace, National Reconciliation and Reconstruction, including, *inter alia*, commitments for the swift holding of presidential and legislative electoral processes, decentralization and a reinforced judiciary. The Council further commended the signature of an agreement on the principles for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, as well as an agreement by which armed groups had made a commitment to end the recruitment of child soldiers and to liberate from their ranks all children associated with conflict. The Council called on the Secretariat and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) to begin swift implementation of a comprehensive and credible programme of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 6 May, members of the Council condemned in the strongest terms in a statement to the press the attack on 5 May 2015 against the peacekeeping forces of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in Beni territory, in which two peacekeepers from the United Republic of Tanzania were killed and others injured, and underlined that such actions could constitute war crimes under international law.

On 7 May, the Council was briefed, under "Other matters", by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Herve Ladsous, on his recent visit to the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali. Mr. Ladsous informed the Council of a spate of attacks by armed groups targeting civilians and MONUSCO personnel, including the attack on 4 May against a MONUSCO helicopter and the attack on 5 May in which two MONUSCO peacekeepers had been killed. Mr. Ladsous reiterated that any further reduction of

MONUSCO troops had to be bound to improvement of the security situation, to progress in fighting armed groups and to the capacity of the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to ensure security in the country. He called upon the Government to create conditions that would allow the resumption of cooperation with armed forces and recalled that MONUSCO had been mandated by resolution 2211 (2015) to act unilaterally.

Council members expressed their concern over the security situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and reiterated their support to MONUSCO. They also called for resumption of cooperation between MONUSCO and the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and stressed that further reduction of MONUSCO troops had to be linked to the achievement of significant progress in the security situation in the country.

Liberia

On 5 May, the Council held a briefing and closed consultations on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). The Council was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia and Head of UNMIL, Karin Landgren, and the Chair of the Liberia configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and Permanent Representative of Sweden, Olof Skoog. A statement was also made by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Liberia, Benedict F. Sannoh.

Ms. Landgren informed the Council of the steps that the Government of Liberia was taking to fully assume its security responsibilities from UNMIL by 30 June 2016, pursuant to resolutions 2190 (2014) and 2215 (2015), and that the "Government of Liberia Plan for UNMIL Transition" had been endorsed by the National Security Council of Liberia. She further informed the Council of her efforts to urge the Government of Liberia to include justice and security sectors in post-Ebola recovery planning. The Special Representative also stressed that the factors which had contributed to spread of Ebola needed to be addressed. Mr. Skoog told the Council about his recent trip to the country, which had been aimed at identifying ways for the Peacebuilding Commission to support the peacebuilding priorities during Ebola recovery and the UNMIL transition processes in Liberia. Mr. Sannoh focused his remarks on the progress achieved towards the consolidation of peace, the promotion of national reconciliation and the creation of an enabling environment for political, economic and social development in Liberia. He also noted that while the Secretary-General, in his twenty-ninth report on UNMIL (S/2015/275) had fairly represented the situation in Liberia, some of the incidents reported had not provided a holistic picture of the situation in the country.

In consultations, Ms. Landgren focused her remarks on sources of potential instability and urged the Council to remain engaged in Liberia. Council members discussed challenges to the Government to meet the security transition target of 30 June 2016 and efforts to consolidate Liberia's peacebuilding gains.

Libya (International Criminal Court)

On 11 May, the Council held an informal interactive informal dialogue with the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Fatou Bensouda, on the situation in Libya, referred by the Council to ICC, and on Libya's cooperation with the Court. The Permanent Representative of Libya participated in the meeting.

Ms. Bensouda stressed the importance of cooperation among the Court, the Libya Prosecutor's Office, States Parties to the Rome Statute of ICC and the Security Council, and encouraged the finding of solutions to address non-compliance through practical steps and the lessons learned in Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Mali. The Prosecutor encouraged the establishment of an international contact group through which material and judicial support could be provided to assist in implementation of the Court's mandate. The lack of resources, an increase in the number of cases over the past 10 years and the security challenges posed to ICC staff members in Libya were highlighted as key problems.

Council members shared the Prosecutor's concern about the deteriorating situation in Libya, and broadly agreed with the need for strengthened cooperation with the Court and the obligation to fight impunity for crimes. A number of Council members expressed their concern over non-cooperation with the Court by the Government of Libya in the case of Saif al-Islam Qadhafi and encouraged the Government to implement its legal obligations. Several Council members were interested in practical steps that the Council could take to help increase the efficiency of the work of the Court, while several Council members pointed out that such steps should not bear upon the independent character of the Court. Some Council members emphasized the need to respect the judicial independence of States and the complementary role of the Court.

On 12 May, the Council was briefed by Ms. Bensouda on actions taken pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), by which the Council had referred the situation in Libya to the Prosecutor. The Permanent Representative of Libya participated in the meeting. The Prosecutor repeatedly emphasized the importance of cooperation among the Court, Libyan Prosecutor-General's Office, States Parties to the Rome Statute and the Council. She expressed concern over the growing political instability in the country, and the difficulty of closing the impunity gap in Libya. The Prosecutor was worried over the ongoing threats to media workers, human rights defenders and women, in particular. She suggested the formation of an international contact group on justice issues; a suggestion which some Council members supported. Ms. Bensouda further expressed concern over the unresolved issues pertaining to individuals in detention in Libya and the mass displacement of Tawerghans. She noted that the jurisdiction of the Court over Libya *prima facie* extends to alleged crimes committed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), or Daesh. The Prosecutor stressed Libya's ongoing non-cooperation with the Court in the case of Saif al-Islam Qadhafi.

Council members widely echoed the concerns of the Prosecutor about the political and security situation in Libya, with most recognizing its impact on accountability efforts. The members of the Council welcomed positive cooperation between the Prosecutor of the Court and Libya's Prosecutor-General Office. Some members of the Council supported the call of the Prosecutor for Libya to immediately surrender Saif al-Islam Qadhafi to the custody of the Court. Some Council members urged the Office of the Prosecutor to closely monitor ongoing violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Libya. The Permanent Representative of Libya, Ibrahim O. A. Dabbashi, reaffirmed the commitment of Libya to the achievement of justice and accountability.

Mali

On 1 May, members of the Council, in a statement to the press, expressed deep concern over the outbreak of violence in northern Mali and demanded that the hostilities cease immediately. Council members reiterated their readiness to consider targeted sanctions against those who resumed hostilities and violated the ceasefire. They encouraged the parties to engage constructively and in good faith, with a view to signing the draft agreement on peace and reconciliation in Mali on 15 May 2015 in Bamako.

On 7 May, the Council was briefed, under "Other matters", by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and the Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, Atul Khare, on the recent developments in Mali and the challenges faced by the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in the deployment of the Mission's remaining contingents and enablers and the sustainment of its forces in northern Mali. Mr. Ladsous warned that major ceasefire violations by all parties since 27 April 2015 had posed a threat to the peace process. He requested the Council to maintain pressure on the Malian parties to remain committed to the peace process and sign the draft agreement on peace and reconciliation in Mali. Mr. Ladsous underlined that the dialogue should continue and that the agreement should be left open for those willing to accede to it later. Mr. Khare emphasized that the challenging security situation was having an impact on providing field support to the Mission. Council members expressed their concern over continued ceasefire violations and urged the parties to remain committed to the peace process, to continue to dialogue and to allow those willing to join the agreement at the later stage. Some Council members spoke in favour of considering targeted sanctions against those who resumed hostilities and violated the ceasefire.

On 28 May, the Council was briefed under "Other matters" by Mr. Ladsous on his trip to attend the signing of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation on 15 May in Bamako. Mr. Ladsous updated the Council on his meeting with the President of Mali, Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta, and on ongoing mediation efforts to resolve the security situation in Ménaka (Gao region), in Algiers. The Under-Secretary-General expressed his concern over the accusations of partiality against MINUSMA by the Government of Mali and ongoing security threats confronting the Mission, including the mine attack on 28 May on the convoy carrying the Force Commander and Police Commissioner of MINUSMA. Mr. Ladsous spoke about the deteriorating security situation in Ménaka and the ongoing ceasefire violations by all sides. He said it was time for the Council to increase pressure on the parties and consider the imposition of targeted sanctions against those who violated the ceasefire agreements. The Under-Secretary-General emphasized the challenges for MINUSMA to implement its mandate in the context of a partial peace agreement. Council members urged the parties to remain engaged in the peace process and further called on those parties that had not yet done so to sign the Agreement. Members of the Council deplored the attacks against MINUSMA, reiterated their full support to the Mission and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali, Mongi Hamdi, and stressed the need to define the role of MINUSMA in the implementation of the Agreement. Council members urged the parties to cease all hostilities and to recommit to the ceasefire agreements. Some Council members voiced support for the imposition of targeted sanctions against those who violate the ceasefire agreements.

On 29 May, the Council, in its statement to the press, deplored the shooting incident that had taken place in Bamako on 25 May, during which a Bangladeshi peacekeeper of MINUSMA had been killed and another injured. The members of the Council condemned in the strongest terms the explosion of a mine on a MINUSMA convoy on 28 May in the region of Timbuktu. The members of the Council reiterated their full support to MINUSMA and the French forces that support it.

**Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005)
(concerning the Sudan)**

On 28 May, the Council was briefed in consultations by the Chair of the Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005) concerning the Sudan, the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Rafael Darío Ramírez Carreño, on the work of the Committee during the period from 7 February to 28 May 2015. The Chair recalled resolution 2200 (2015), which had extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts until March 2016, and the appointment of the Panel members by the Secretary-General on 12 March. He informed the Council that the Committee had held one informal meeting on 6 May to hear a presentation by the Panel of Experts on its programme of work. He also informed the Council about the bilateral meeting on 16 April between the Chair of the Committee and the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Sudan to the United Nations, held as a follow-up action on the recommendations of the Panel to the Committee. Council members welcomed the upcoming meeting of the Chair of the Committee with Sudan and regional States, noting the importance of regional cooperation for the effective implementation of sanctions. Some noted the dire security situation in Darfur, with civilians continuing to bear the brunt of the conflict. In this regard, the members of the Council called on the Government of Sudan to comply with its obligations under the sanctions regime and to ensure full cooperation with the Panel of Experts, including through the timely issuance of entry visas and the facilitation of access to Darfur. Some Council members remarked on the need for the Panel to strictly adhere to its mandate and to base its reports on objective and verified information.

Sudan and South Sudan

On 5 May, the Council was briefed in consultations of the whole by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations on the situation in Abyei and on the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force in Abyei (UNISFA). Mr. Ladsous noted that the situation in the Abyei area remained volatile with a few significant incidents involving militias and armed elements from both Sudan and South Sudan. He said that in two cases, the attacks had resulted in the abduction of children. Mr. Ladsous also noted that no incidents had been recorded in the area in relation to the national elections held in the Sudan in April. The Under-Secretary-General furthermore reported that the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee (AJOC) had resumed its activities after two years of inactivity and that a meeting of traditional leaders had been planned.

Members of the Council welcomed the resumption of AJOC, as well as its intentions to organize the dialogue among traditional leaders. Many members welcomed the active engagement of the African Union in facilitating the meeting. They also expressed their concern about the continued vacuum in public administration and the rule of law, as well as the security risks arising from

intercommunal tensions and the proliferation of small arms, which could further exacerbate the security and humanitarian situation in Abyei. A number of Council members voiced their appreciation and strong support for UNISFA in the implementation of its mandate, with some stressing that the force could not replace the administration in Abyei and that the decision on Abyei must remain the responsibility of the two Governments.

On 5 May, the Council held a private meeting with the countries contributing troops to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

On 12 May, the Council was briefed in closed consultations by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Ivan Šimonović, and the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and Legal Counsel, Miguel de Serpa Soares, on accountability options for international humanitarian law and human rights violations in South Sudan committed since December 2013. Mr. Soares stressed that the capacities of the justice system in South Sudan following 16 months of conflict were severely limited, underlining that it would not be in a position to sustain credible judicial processes without significant international support. He further presented a number of possible options for criminal accountability processes, including the exercise of jurisdiction by existing international tribunals and the establishment of new international or internationally assisted criminal tribunals. Mr. Šimonović focused his remarks on non-judicial mechanisms for the transitional justice, such as truth seeking, national consultations and reconciliation. He stressed that accountability and transitional justice would be central to finding a lasting peace in South Sudan and that a peace agreement should provide for accountability and transitional justice measures. Mr. Šimonović urged the Council to remain seized of the question of accountability for past and present violations in South Sudan.

Many members of the Council spoke in favour of the establishment of appropriate international justice mechanisms owing to the lack of capacity of the justice system of South Sudan to address the crimes committed in the country in accordance with international standards. A few members voiced their support for the exercise of jurisdiction by the International Criminal Court and the public release of the report of the African Union Commission of Inquiry that might help to facilitate investigations. Some Council members noted that notwithstanding the importance of the justice and accountability question, priority must be given to peace negotiations and the pursuit of a peace agreement in South Sudan. Many members of the Council agreed, however, on the need for substantial international support to assist in building the national judicial capacities of South Sudan, while some stressed the responsibility of South Sudanese to combat impunity in their country.

On 14 May, the Council held a briefing and consultations on UNMISS and on the work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) concerning South Sudan. The Council was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMISS, Ellen Margrethe Løj, and heard a statement by the representative of the Chair of the 2206 Committee, Ambassador Carlos Olgún, Deputy Permanent Representative of Chile. A statement was also made by the Permanent Representative of South Sudan.

Ms. Løj updated the Council on the recent fighting in Unity State owing to military offensives by pro-government forces and said that it had forced thousands of civilians to flee, with some seeking shelter in the overcrowded United Nations compounds. She warned the members of the Council of widespread human rights

violations and the very bleak humanitarian situation in the country, with the humanitarian response being seriously underfunded. She further said that the peace process being led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) remained at a standstill owing to the intransigence of the warring parties. Ms. Løj also pointed out the ongoing violations of the status-of-forces agreement and the occurrence of attacks against, and harassment of, United Nations and humanitarian personnel.

Mr. Olguín briefed the Council on the work of the Committee during the period since the adoption of resolution 2206 (2015) on 3 March. He informed the Council that the Committee's Guidelines had been adopted on 20 April and that the members of the Panel of Experts had been appointed by the Secretary-General on 27 April. He reported on two informal meetings of the Committee on 28 April and 8 May with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), and with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Zinab Bangura, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children in Armed Conflict, Laila Zerrougui, respectively. Mr. Olguín informed that the Committee looked forward to receiving 90-day reports on the implementation of the travel ban and assets freeze by 3 June.

Council members expressed deep concern at the reports of the renewed fighting and the humanitarian consequences thereof. Members of the Council also affirmed the importance of a meaningful engagement of the parties with IGAD and expressed strong support to the mediation efforts being led by IGAD, the continued engagement by the African Union and the role that a unified region could play in search of sustainable peace in South Sudan. Many members spoke in favour of imposing targeted sanctions on individuals as a means of strengthening the mediation efforts by IGAD, while some expressed doubts about their effectiveness as a means of promoting the peace process in the country.

On 17 May, the Council issued a statement to the press in which its members condemned the renewed large-scale violence in Unity State and the large-scale attack by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) (in Opposition) on the town of Malakal, Upper Nile State. They underlined their grave concern over the large-scale displacement and increased insecurity that led to the suspension of nearly all activity and delivery of aid to populations in the affected areas, which further magnified the dire humanitarian crisis. The Council called upon all parties to engage meaningfully in the peace process so as to bring about a political solution to the crisis and an end to the conflict through the peace process led by IGAD and renewed regional and international efforts. Members of the Council reiterated their willingness to impose sanctions against those who threatened the peace, security or stability of South Sudan.

On 28 May, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2223 (2015), extending the mandate of UNMISS until 30 November 2015, retaining its focus on four key tasks: the protection of civilians; the monitoring and investigation of violations of human rights; the creation of conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance; and the provision of support to the implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. The resolution commended the mediation efforts by IGAD and called for the immediate and full implementation of the cessation of hostilities agreements by the Government of South Sudan and SPLM/A

in Opposition, expressing its willingness to impose targeted sanctions pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) against any party taking action to undermine peace, stability and security in the country. The resolution condemned acts of sexual violence, and urged that all allegations of human rights violations and abuses be investigated, calling for accountability for anyone responsible.

Somalia

On 12 May, the Council heard, under "Other matters", an update by one delegation on the issue of the report on sexual exploitation and abuse by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which was released by the African Union Independent Investigation Team on 21 April 2015. A member of the Council commended the work of the African Union investigation team, highlighted some of the obstacles the investigators faced and requested an update on the next steps in the investigation. The Council decided to remain seized of the matter.

On 19 May, the Council held a briefing and consultations on the situation in Somalia. The Council was briefed through videoteleconferencing from Addis Ababa by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), Nicholas Kay, and the African Union Special Representative for Somalia and Head of AMISOM, Maman Sidikou. The Council also heard a statement by the Prime Minister of Somalia, Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, through videoteleconferencing from Mogadishu.

The Special Representative presented to the Council the report of the Secretary-General on Somalia (S/2015/331) and underlined that following the end of the political crisis, the process of federal State-building had regained momentum. He noted that the President and the Prime Minister, the Parliament Speaker and the leaders of the Puntland, Jubba and South West Administrations were all determined to deliver on the "Vision 2016" plan. Mr. Kay stressed that the African Union-United Nations partnership in Somalia was unique, strong and essential for success. He underscored the importance of addressing outstanding issues, such as forming Interim Regional Administrations and assemblies, advancing the constitutional review, establishing the National Independent Electoral Commission and Boundaries and Federation Commission, and finalizing legislation on political parties, citizenship and elections. He further expressed concern about the decision to postpone elections in Somaliland until March 2017. Mr. Kay underscored that Al-Shabaab remained a threat to the political process, and thus, that the renewal of the joint Somali-African Union offensive against the group was a priority. The African Union Special Representative updated the Council on security issues and on the recently concluded joint African Union-United Nations review of conditions for the possible deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping mission and the steps that AMISOM had taken in response to allegations of sexual abuse by its personnel. He noted the conclusion of the joint mission that the situation in Somalia as a whole was not conducive to the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation until the end of 2016, at the earliest. He welcomed the recommendation to extend the duration of the surge of deployment of AMISOM and its reconfiguration to respond to evolving realities. The Prime Minister of Somalia presented to the Council the strategy of the Federal Government to fight Al-Shabaab, and called on the Council to authorize a support package to integrate additional personnel into the Somali National Army. In closed consultations, Council members called on the international community to continue to assist the Federal Government of Somalia to advance the political process, eradicate

the threat of Al-Shabaab, improve the humanitarian situation, and promote peacebuilding and sustained development.

On 26 May, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2221 (2015), extending the mandate of UNSOM until 7 August 2015.

Middle East

Iraq

On 14 May, the Council held a briefing and consultations of the whole on the reports of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), where it heard the briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNAMI, Ján Kubiš, who addressed the Council in this capacity for the first time, and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos. The Permanent Representative of Iraq, Mohamed Ali Alhakim, delivered the statement under rule 37 of the rules of procedure of the Council.

The Special Representative presented the third report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2169 (2014) and the sixth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of resolution 2017 (2013). He told the Council of his mixed first impressions, but noted some positive perspectives. He thought that Iraq faced unprecedented challenges and needed strong international support. Mr. Kubiš stressed that Iraq might become a success story with continuous and long-term political, financial and material support. He further underlined that the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) was far from being defeated, and that gains by the Government remained fragile. The Special Representative also underlined the importance of inclusive political processes, legal, political and administrative reforms for national unity and reconciliation. He particularly encouraged Baghdad and Erbil to continue working together towards resolving open issues in order to secure the sustainable management and fair distribution of Iraq's natural resources. The Under-Secretary-General underlined that the humanitarian outlook in Iraq remained deeply worrying, with over 8.2 million people in need of humanitarian aid, 2.8 million displaced and over 1 million in need of shelter. She expressed a particular concern about the situation of millions of Iraqis trapped in areas controlled by ISIL and people who fled areas that had been liberated from ISIL. Ms. Amos noted severe funding shortfalls for the humanitarian programme in Iraq. The Permanent Representative of Iraq noted that the country's problems were multinational in nature, with the presence in the country of terrorists from over 60 nations. He expressed regret that Council resolutions on the fight against terrorism had not been fully implemented by all Member States and that the flow of terrorists continued. Mr. Alhakim emphasized that it was unrealistic to destroy ISIL in Iraq alone, so there was a need to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic to return to peace in both States.

In consultations, Council members reiterated their support to the territorial integrity and unity of Iraq, the importance for Iraq to continue reforms, decentralization and national reconciliation in good faith. They reaffirmed that terrorism remained the biggest challenge affecting Iraq and the entire region. Some Council members emphasized in this regard that the international community should support Iraq and other countries of the region in their fight against terrorism by the

application of uniform standards. They stressed the importance of good relationships between Iraq and regional countries, as well as between Baghdad and Erbil. Council members reiterated the importance of reconciliation, inclusiveness and accountability. Many expressed deep concern about violations of human rights in areas liberated from ISIL. They reiterated their concern about the growing humanitarian crisis and the severe lack of funding. Council members reiterated their full support to UNAMI and Mr. Kubiš.

Syrian Arab Republic

On 4 May, under "Other matters", the Council was briefed in consultations by the Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, and the Director of the Syria Field Office for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Michael Kingsley-Nyinah, on the worsening situation in the Yarmouk camp for Palestinian refugees, on the outskirts of Damascus. Mr. Kingsley-Nyinah spoke of the dangerous situation inside the camp, where the lives of civilians were in jeopardy. He specifically mentioned the incidents of 28 April and 1 May, which involved the use of heavy weapons and caused serious damage to civilian property. UNRWA was yet to gain safe humanitarian access inside the Yarmouk camp. He mentioned that the humanitarian response had been successfully extended to the districts of Yalda, Babila and Beit Sahem in rural Damascus during the past three weeks, but noted that the humanitarian efforts in those areas had been interrupted since 30 April, owing to security concerns. The Special Envoy also underlined that credible information was available confirming the use of barrel bombs and rockets during the fighting inside the camp on 28 April and 1 May, and stressed that there could be no justification for the use of indiscriminate weapons against thousands of civilians on the ground.

Members of the Council expressed their concern at the worsening situation in the Yarmouk camp and condemned the acts of terrorism perpetrated by ISIL and the Al-Nusra Front in the camp. Council members reiterated their call on the parties to support the United Nations in its efforts to assist civilians inside the camp, those wishing to temporarily relocate and those who had already fled, including through ensuring humanitarian access. They stressed the importance of observing international humanitarian law and of guaranteeing appropriate safeguards while allowing the safe and unhindered relocation of civilians from the camp. Many Council members condemned the renewed indiscriminate aerial bombardment and shelling of the camp by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and called on it to cease such attacks immediately. Some members of the Council stressed that the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic had the right and the obligation to fight terrorism on its territory.

On 7 May, the Council was briefed in closed consultations by the United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Angela Kane, on the progress achieved in the elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme. Ms. Kane expressed concern in relation to the discrepancies in the chemical weapons declaration by the Syrian Arab Republic and noted that one or two additional visits by the Declaration Assessment Team might be needed. She stressed that access should be guaranteed to the fact-finding mission, which had previously been delayed owing to a miscommunication between the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the authorities of the Syrian Arab Republic. Members of the Council welcomed the progress achieved so far in destroying

facilities for the manufacture of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, but expressed their concern at the omissions and discrepancies in the chemical weapons declaration and subsequent documents submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic. They encouraged the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate closely with the Declaration Assessment Team. Several members of the Council noted that the fact-finding mission should be allowed to enter the country as soon as possible and urged all parties to cooperate with the fact-finding mission and to ensure the safety of its members. Council members expressed serious concern at reports alleging the continuous illegal use of toxic chemicals, chlorine in particular, in the Syrian Arab Republic and asked for those reports to be investigated thoroughly and impartially and for those responsible to be held accountable. Finally, a number of Council members strongly supported the proposal put forward by one delegation that the Council begin work on a resolution that would establish an attribution mechanism.

On 22 May, in its statement to the press, Council members strongly condemned the ongoing barbaric terrorist acts by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) in the Syrian Arab Republic, including its takeover of Palmyra. Members of the Council expressed deep concern for the residents of Palmyra inside the city, as well as for those displaced as a result of the advance of ISIL and called for the safe passage of civilians fleeing the violence. They reaffirmed that the primary responsibility to protect its population rested with the authorities of the Syrian Arab Republic. Members of the Council condemned in the strongest terms the terrorist acts and the destruction of cultural heritage in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic committed by ISIL, and underlined the need to bring the perpetrators of those acts to justice. They noted with concern that ISIL and other individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with Al-Qaida were generating income from engaging in the looting and smuggling of cultural heritage items, which was being used to support their recruitment efforts and to strengthen their operational capability to organize and carry out terrorist attacks. Members of the Council stated their grave concern for the protection of the World Heritage site of Palmyra.

On 28 May, the Council held a briefing and informal consultations on the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic and the implementation of Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014). The Council was briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos. In what was to be her last briefing to the Council, the Under-Secretary-General described the extremely grave situation throughout the Syrian Arab Republic, which was deteriorating by the day. A total of 540,000 people had been displaced in 2015 alone, adding to the 7.6 million already displaced and the more than 12.2 million people who were in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. She underlined indiscriminate attacks against civilians, including on civilian objects, such as schools and hospitals, and she added that the use of chlorine continued to be reported. The Under-Secretary-General stressed that new rules and regulations introduced by the Government had resulted in delays and distractions, and had prevented the delivery of assistance, including surgical supplies. She also informed the Council of the killing of civilians by ISIL following the capture of Palmyra. Ms. Amos further stressed that the Secretary-General had systematically reported on the continued non-compliance by the Syrian Arab Republic with resolution 2139 (2014). She stated that while the cross-border deliveries enabled by resolutions 2165 and 2191 had allowed the United Nations to extend its reach, the parties to the conflict had ignored practically all aspects of

resolution 2139 (2014). Ms. Amos called on the Council to demonstrate its leadership and take concrete measures to ensure protection of civilians and facilitate humanitarian access to all people throughout the country without discrimination. She also stressed the importance of bringing an end to the sieges, which collectively punished people, and called on the Council to consider all possible avenues to ensure accountability for violations of international law. The Under-Secretary-General underlined the need to step up financial support for the humanitarian response effort in the Syrian Arab Republic and the importance of respecting the non-political nature of humanitarian aid. In follow-up consultations, Council members echoed deep concern over the further deterioration of the humanitarian situation, the continuous violence, the violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law in the Syrian Arab Republic and the non-implementation of resolution 2139 (2014) by the parties to the conflict. A number of Council members urged that the humanitarian situation in besieged areas be addressed, including through the dispatch of a humanitarian assessment mission, mandated by the Council, which would assess the humanitarian needs and negotiate humanitarian access. Many Council members condemned the numerous attacks on medical personnel and facilities and expressed concern that free passage of medical, including surgical, supplies was not being granted. Some Council members underlined the importance of counter-terrorism efforts in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

On 19 May, the Council held a briefing and consultations on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. The Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nikolay Mladenov, provided to the Council his first briefing in his new capacity. Mr. Mladenov expressed concern over the stalemate in the Middle East Peace Process and stressed that it was even more critical for the Israelis and the Palestinians to negotiate a two-State solution. He called on the new Government of Israel to take credible steps, including a freeze in settlement activity. The Special Coordinator reiterated the necessity of continued security cooperation by both sides. The Secretary-General stood ready to explore realistic options for a return to meaningful negotiations within a reasonable timeframe. The Special Coordinator noted the desperate situation in Gaza. He stressed that the slow pace of reconstruction and the lack of financial support to rebuild Gaza put the Strip at risk of implosion. He also underlined that there was a moral and humanitarian imperative, not just for the United Nations, but for the Israeli and Palestinian authorities, to prevent such an implosion, and that without Palestinian unity and reconciliation, which must include the resumption of control by the Government of National Consensus over crossings to Israel and Egypt, and paving the way for general elections in Palestine, which were long overdue, all efforts to improve the situation would face major difficulties.

In consultations, the members of the Council expressed serious concern about the worsening situation on the ground, in particular in Gaza, and called upon the international community to honour its commitment to the reconstruction of Gaza. Council members urged the parties to stop unilateral actions, show strong leadership and return to negotiations. They underlined the important roles that the United Nations, the European Union and Arab countries, and the United States could play in this process. Many members of the Council condemned the continued settlement

plans announced by Israel as a violation of international law and major obstacle to the peace talks.

Yemen

On 1 May, the Council held consultations on the humanitarian situation in Yemen. The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Jeffrey Feltman, updated Council members on the deteriorating situation on the ground, with the health, water and sanitation infrastructure on the point of collapse. The Under-Secretary-General stressed that urgent humanitarian aid and unfettered humanitarian access to local populations should be complemented by a political process, and called on the parties to the conflict to return to the negotiating table in good faith. He apprised Council members of the efforts of the Secretary-General and his newly appointed Special Envoy for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, to facilitate a meeting among various parties aiming to put the transition process back on track. Council members shared unanimous concern over the deepening humanitarian crisis in Yemen, recognizing that it could be resolved only through a political process. They welcomed the initiative of the Secretary-General to hold a conference in Geneva and voiced their full support for the new Special Envoy.

On 12 May, members of the Council, in their statement to the press, reaffirmed their strong commitment to the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Yemen and demanded full implementation of resolution 2216 (2015). They welcomed the appointment of Ismail Cheikh Ahmed as the Special Envoy for Yemen and reiterated their request that the Secretary-General intensify his good offices role in order to enable a resumption of a political transition that is peaceful, inclusive, orderly and led by the Yemenis themselves, including through a conference of all Yemeni stakeholders. Members of the Council called on Yemeni parties to engage without preconditions, to reject acts of violence and to refrain from all unilateral actions. Council members further expressed their grave concern at the humanitarian crisis, welcomed the initiative of Saudi Arabia and the Government of Yemen to implement a five-day humanitarian pause and urged all parties to facilitate a rapid, safe and unhindered access for humanitarian actors to reach people in need.

On 20 May, the Council held consultations on Yemen and was briefed by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, and Operations Director of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, John Ging. The Special Representative underscored that the situation in Yemen was grave and that the longer the violence endured, the more intractable the conflict became. He underlined that the conference convened by the Secretary-General in Geneva on 28 May would be an important stepping stone for a process that had to be Yemeni-led in order to succeed. He further noted that terrorist groups were the biggest beneficiaries from the ongoing conflict. Mr. Ging emphasized that the already serious humanitarian situation in Yemen was further aggravated by the armed conflict. He stressed that children were particularly vulnerable, and that hospitals and health workers were constantly being targeted. He further noted the importance of the five-day humanitarian pause, but acknowledged it was too short a span, since only a small fraction of needs had been satisfied. The Special Representative also underlined the willingness of humanitarian actors to do more, but noted that they were constrained by the severe insecurity caused by the resumed fighting. Council members welcomed the humanitarian pause, but acknowledged that its duration had

been too short and that further pauses were needed. Many Council members expressed concern at violations of international humanitarian law, in particular, by the Houthis. Following the consultations, Council members, in a statement released to the press, welcomed the announcement of the Secretary-General that a conference of all Yemeni stakeholders would be convened in Geneva on 28 May and reaffirmed their call on all Yemeni parties to attend those talks and to engage without preconditions and in good faith.

Europe

Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 12 May, the Council held a debate on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In his briefing to the Council, the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Valentin Inzko, welcomed the newly elected authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, urged them to work together and to take the necessary steps in order to take the advantage of the European Union's initiative for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Statements were made by the representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and the European Union.

Council members supported the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Many expressed concern over the divisive and secessionist rhetoric in the Republika Srpska and feared that it might undermine the peace agreement, unity and stability of the country, stressing that the peace agreement did not grant entities the right to secede. One Council member expressed doubt about the veracity of accusations against Bosnian Serbs and noted that some statements by some Bosniaks and Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina might undermine the spirit of the Dayton Agreement. Many Council members welcomed the formation of a new Government and emphasized the need for continued social and economic reforms. Most Council members also welcomed the commitment by newly elected authorities for continued reforms in the context of the relations between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Union, as well as the entry into force of the Stabilization and Association Agreement. The majority of Council members expressed support for the continued presence of the European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Operation EUFOR ALTHEA), and for the work of the Office of the High Representative, and called for the further implementation of conditions that would enable the closure of the Office, while one Council member opposed the use of presence of international entities to accelerate the integration of the country into the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Several delegates expressed concern over the growth of violent extremism in the country and region, and welcomed efforts by Bosnia and Herzegovina to address the problem of foreign fighters.

Cyprus

On 15 May, members of the Security Council, in a statement to the press, welcomed the resumption on 15 May 2015 of the Cyprus settlement talks, in the framework of the good offices mission of the Secretary-General, and expressed the hope that the leaders would take advantage of the opportunity to reach a comprehensive settlement, as set out in relevant Council resolutions. Members of the Council reaffirmed their support for the process in line with the joint

communiqué of 11 February 2014 and to the efforts of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus, Espen Barth Eide.

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations (European Union)

On 11 May, the Council was briefed by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, on the smuggling and trafficking of migrants across the Mediterranean Sea and the cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in this regard. The United Nations Special Representative for International Migration, Peter D. Sutherland, and the African Union Permanent Observer to the United Nations, Antonio Tete, also gave their assessments.

The European Union High Representative underlined the need for urgent action to save lives and the importance of shared regional and global solidarity and partnership. The High Representative noted that the humanitarian emergency had evolved into a serious security crisis, and that smuggling networks were linked to, and in some cases provided financing to, terrorist activities. The High Representative further stressed the need for a comprehensive emergency response to this structural phenomenon and effective action on its root causes, as well as the need for a longer-term vision. She informed the Council of a possible naval operation by the European Union in the framework of the Common Security and Defence Policy, and expressed the willingness of the European Union to work closely on this issue with the United Nations, in particular, the Security Council. Noting the absence of a unity Government in Libya that could exercise its legitimate authority over the entire territory of the country and its borders, and that the vast majority of human trafficking and smuggling was taking place through Libya, the High Representative reiterated the support of the European Union to the United Nations-led dialogue to reach an agreement on the formation of the Government of National Unity. The United Nations Special Representative outlined the priorities of the Organization for a collective response to the situation, including through an urgent focus on saving lives, boosting law enforcement against smugglers, increasing safe avenues for refugee resettlements, promoting greater solidarity among countries, and intensifying efforts to end conflicts that have led to the displacement of so many people. Mr. Tete urged that collective efforts to address the root causes of the crisis be stepped up through a holistic approach, that partnerships among the African Union, the United Nations and the European Union, as well as countries of origin, transit and destination, be enhanced.

Following the briefing, members of the Council held an informal interactive dialogue with the High Representative of the European Union to exchange views on the smuggling of migrants in the Mediterranean region. The High Representative of the European Union stressed the urgency to act quickly in response to the multifaceted humanitarian, security and stability crisis in the Mediterranean region. She further emphasized the relationship with the Libyan authorities and the need for the Council to authorize the European Union to launch a naval operation in the framework of its Common Security and Defence Policy. Council members emphasized the importance of identifying comprehensive and holistic solutions to the migration crisis in the Mediterranean region, and in close partnerships with regional organizations, in particular the African Union. Council members also

requested the High Representative of the European Union to provide further details on the modalities of the European Union's naval operation.

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

On 26 May, the Council held its quarterly debate on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMIK, Farid Zarif, gave a briefing. The Council also heard from the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Ivica Dačić, and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kosovo, Hashim Thaçi. The Special Representative noted the important steps taken by Belgrade and Pristina along their respective European paths, welcomed the continuation of the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue facilitated by the European Union and called for the implementation of the agreements reached therein, including one of the core provisions of the April 2013 Agreement, namely the establishment of the association/community of Serb-majority municipalities. He welcomed increasing direct high-level contacts between Pristina and Belgrade, alongside the European Union-facilitated dialogue. He called for the completion of necessary steps towards the establishment of the specialist court. He noted the substantial efforts of the Kosovo authorities to address the recent phenomenon of irregular migration from Kosovo and the issues of violent extremism. He stressed the importance of active regional cooperation in addressing transnational challenges while expressing concern at the deadly armed clashes with the police in Kumanovo, which had involved several individuals from Kosovo. Both ministers reaffirmed their commitment to normalization of relations and progress on the path to integration into the European Union.

Council members welcomed the formation of the government of Kosovo, and the resumption of the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue at the political level. They called for continued engagement from both sides in resolving outstanding issues, including the establishment of an association/community of Serb majority municipalities of Kosovo, as well as the return of internally displaced persons. Some Council members welcomed progress in the Kosovo-EU relations and the entry into force of the European Union-Kosovo Stabilization and Association agreement. Members of the Council reiterated their support for UNMIK and the European Union Rule of Law Mission and called for full implementation of their mandates. Some Council members suggested considering reducing the frequency of the debates in the Council on UNMIK, taking into account the progress in the normalization of relations in the framework of the European Union-facilitated dialogue. Some Council members stressed the importance of establishing the specialist court to adjudicate cases following the findings by the European Union Special Investigative Task Force. Some Council members welcomed the measures taken by Kosovo authorities to fight violent extremism, radicalism and terrorism, and the promulgation of legislation regarding foreign terrorist fighters, while one Council member believed that the issue should remain a priority for UNMIK. Some Council members reaffirmed that resolution 1244 (1999) remained the applicable international legal basis for Kosovo settlement.

Asia

Myanmar

On 28 May, the Council was briefed, under "Other matters", by Zeid Ra'ad Al-Husseini, High Commissioner for Human Rights, on the human rights situation in Myanmar. The High Commissioner stressed that the human rights situation in the country was worrying, especially in Rakhine State. He noted that the Rohingya were being subjected to multiple forms of discrimination, as well as to restriction of their freedom of movement, peaceful assembly and religion; their access to citizenship was extremely limited and access to basic services denied, while absolute poverty reigned. The High Commissioner further stated that some groups faced institutionalized discrimination. He noted that with the tightening of border controls by neighbouring States, many migrants and asylum seekers had taken to sea without food and water, and mass graves had been found in Thailand and Malaysia. The High Commissioner reminded the Council of a regional meeting planned for 29 May in Bangkok that would aim at finding a solution to the issue of refugees/irregular migration. The High Commissioner called on the Government of Myanmar to implement more transparent and flexible procedures for granting citizenship to members of the Rohingya population. He further stressed the necessity to abandon discriminatory measures and ensure accountability.

Many Council members were gravely concerned at the human rights situation in Myanmar, especially in Rakhine State. Various forms of discrimination of the Rohingya people were mentioned, some Council members referring to the issue of citizenship and the right to vote during forthcoming elections. A number of Council members expressed their concern over the serious situation of migrants and asylum seekers at sea, with a majority of Council members stressing that this issue had to be resolved at the regional level. Some Council members reiterated that irregular migration involved issues related to combating crimes, such as human trafficking and smuggling of people. Others noted that Myanmar was undergoing the reconciliation process and that the stability of the country was the most important issue.

Non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) (concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

On 28 May, the Council was briefed in consultations by the Chair of the Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), the Permanent Representative of Spain, Román Oyarzun, on the work of the Committee during the period from 26 February to 27 May.

The Chair informed the Council about the Committee's discussions at its meeting of 20 April, which focused on the recent launches of ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 2 March and about the recommendations contained in the 2015 Final Report of the Panel of Experts. He informed the Council that nine letters had been received from Member States following the launches of ballistic missiles on 2 March and a ballistic missile-related test on 8 May. The Chair noted that several members of the Committee had firmly condemned the ballistic missile launches as clear violations of relevant Council resolutions. The Chair also noted that several members of the Committee

had stressed that all parties concerned should keep calm, exercise restraint and make efforts to ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

Council members condemned the launches of ballistic missiles by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and reiterated that such acts violated Council resolutions. Several Council members noted that the Council should take action to prevent the reoccurrence of such violations in the future, including new sanctions designations in line with the recommendations of the Panel of Experts. Some Council members called on the Committee to do more in providing advice to all Member States on the implementation of relevant resolutions. Some members emphasized the importance of the six-party talks in resolving the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula and expressed the need to create conditions for moving forward their early resumption. One delegation noted the need to create an atmosphere of trust by exercising restraint in military activities on the peninsula. Several Council members underlined that the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remained grave and that the Council should continue considering this matter. On the other hand, one Council member emphasized that the Council was not the appropriate place to discuss human rights issues.

Thematic and other issues

Protection of civilians in armed conflict

On 27 May, the Council held an open debate on "The protection of civilians in armed conflict: protection of journalists in conflict situations" and unanimously adopted resolution 2222 (2015), which affirms that a free, independent and impartial media could contribute to the protection of civilians and recognizes that journalists, media professionals and associated personnel could play an important role in the protection of civilians and prevention of conflict, including by acting as an early warning mechanism. United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, Jan Eliasson, Director-General of Reporters Without Borders, Christophe Deloire, and widow of the *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl, Mariane Pearl, briefed the Council. In addition to Council members, 47 Member States and three observers took part in the open debate.

Mr. Eliasson focused his remarks on the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. He stressed the critical role of members of the Council in advancing this agenda and that all killings of journalists in conflict situations must be consistently condemned. He further stressed the need to address corruption, intimidation, reprisals and weak judicial systems that chiefly contributed to impunity. The Deputy Secretary-General noted the need to protect journalists equally in both armed conflict and non-conflict zones, and stressed the different sorts of challenges faced by women journalists. Mr. Eliasson called on missions authorized by the Council to look into and report back to the Council on the safety of journalists as part of their protection of civilians' mandates. Mr. Deloire welcomed the adoption of the new resolution and stressed that it would provide the basis for further action. He called on the Secretary-General to appoint a special representative for the protection of journalists. He further called on the Council to refer relevant cases to the International Criminal Court, in particular with regard to crimes committed in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. Ms. Pearl focused

on the importance of journalism to modern society and emphasized that threats to journalists were posed by State control over information, which frequently skewed the narratives. She also called on Member States to refrain from using the pretext of national security to intimidate journalists. Ms. Pearl stressed that the individuals who braved all such pressures to bring the truth to light must be supported by equal courage from the international community.

Council members, echoed by many other non-Council delegations in the debate, welcomed the adoption of resolution 2222 (2015) and stressed the need to carry out the commitments set out therein. They reiterated the need to combat prevailing impunity and ensure accountability. Several delegations highlighted the role of the International Criminal Court in this context. Many reiterated the primary responsibility of States to ensure the protection of journalists, including through providing them with professional security training before they entered conflict zones. A number of delegations underscored the dangers facing local journalists and freelancers, who were frequently subject to arbitrary arrests and harassment. Many were in particular concerned about the security of journalists working in terrorist-controlled areas. Several delegations warned that violence against journalists was often a precursor to widespread human rights violations. Some stressed the need for peacekeeping operations and special political missions to report on specific acts of violence against journalists, and called on the Council to strengthen their mandates in this regard. Some Member States mentioned the importance of freedom of expression and the work of a free and independent media for the protection of civilians.

Small arms

On 13 May, the Council held an open debate on the human cost of the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. The Council heard a statement by the Secretary-General and briefings by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al-Hussein, and the President of the Côte d'Ivoire chapter of the West African Action Network on Small Arms, Karamoko Diakité. In addition to Council members, 44 delegations participated in the debate.

The Secretary-General stressed that while over 250 conflicts of the past decade had been different in nature, the widespread availability of small arms, light weapons and ammunition had characterized all of them. He emphasized that civilians, including children, suffered the most. The Secretary-General noted that a universal Arms Trade Treaty, adequately implemented, would be critical to removing tools for armed conflict and, together with other instruments, could prevent the misuse and illicit circulation of thousands of weapons. States must enforce arms embargoes and strengthen United Nations missions tasked with arms-related activities. He further underlined that ammunition was an area that deserved far more attention, because cutting its flows had immediate impact on the intensity of armed activity. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights underscored that while trade in small arms was a multi-billion-dollar business, the cost of armed violence in human and economic terms also ran into the hundreds of billions of dollars. He stressed that the majority of victims were ordinary people and were often the poorest or most vulnerable members of society. The ubiquitous availability of small arms could contribute to the sustained denial of human rights, including the rights to education and health, rising violence against women and girls

and the collapse of the rule of law. Mr. Diakité shared his personal experience of the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire and the consequences of the collapse of the Government's control when power fell to groups that had no difficulty in gaining access to arms and ammunition. He noted that during the crisis, weapons and ammunition had entered the country in violation of the arms embargo, including leakages from legal stockpiles. Mr. Diakité underscored that every Member State must do all it can to meet international obligations related to stemming the flow of arms into conflict zones.

Representatives of Member States recognized the immense human cost of illicit transfers, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. They underscored the dangers related to weapons' falling into the hands of terrorist, criminal and armed groups. A number of delegations underscored the role that the Arms Trade Treaty will play in regulating international arms trade and encouraged adherence to this Treaty, while many Member States also reaffirmed the importance of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, with some noting its central role in countering the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons.

On 22 May, the Council adopted resolution 2220 (2015) on small arms and light weapons, co-sponsored by 57 Member States, by a vote of nine in favour, none against and six abstentions. The resolution highlighted the importance of efforts to limit the damaging effect of illicit small arms flows on civilians. Some Council members in their statements of explanation of vote noted the advancements of the resolution, but underscored that concerns regarding the need to halt the supply of small arms and light weapons to non-State actors as well as a few other issues had not been sufficiently addressed in the text of the resolution and encouraged the Council to address those issues in the future. A number of Council members welcomed the resolution for putting civilians and their protection at its core and for providing concrete proposals to increase the effectiveness of United Nations bodies in addressing the issue of small arms. Some Member States stressed the importance of addressing issues related to licensing and brokering of small arms and light weapons.

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

On 22 May, the members of the Council, in a statement to the press, condemned in the strongest terms the terrorist attack claimed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) at a mosque in Qatif, Saudi Arabia, on 22 May 2015, resulting in the deaths of at least 21 people.

On 29 May, the Council held a high-level briefing on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts, with a view to identifying priority actions for the implementation of Council resolution 2178 (2014) on foreign terrorist fighters. The Council heard briefings from the Secretary-General, the Chair of the Council Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) concerning Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, Gerard van Bohemen, Chair of the Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism, Raimonda Murmokaitė, and the Secretary-General of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), Jürgen Stock. For the first time, the Council met at the level of Interior Minister (or equivalent).

The Secretary-General noted that there had been an estimated 70 per cent increase in the number of foreign terrorist fighters worldwide between the middle of 2014 and March 2015. He highlighted the need for Member States to enhance their cooperation and to exchange information, develop effective border controls and strengthen their criminal justice systems, in accordance with the rule of law and human rights standards. He also welcomed the growing emphasis on addressing the underlying drivers of violent extremism at the global, regional, national and local levels to prevent radicalization. The Secretary-General outlined the efforts of the United Nations, including the establishment of working groups on foreign terrorist fighters in the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, the project of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre on "Enhancing the Understanding of Foreign Terrorist Fighters Phenomenon in the Syrian Arab Republic", and announced his intention to present a plan of action to prevent violent extremism. Mr. van Bohemen emphasized that the targeted sanctions against the Al-Qaida regime were an important part of the toolbox to respond to the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters. He described the measures imposed upon individuals and entities designated by 1267/1989 Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee, and referred to several designations approved by the Committee this year. He said that there were now about 25,000 foreign terrorist fighters from over 100 countries, with many of them having travelled to join terrorist entities associated with Al-Qaida, especially the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, and the main movement had been into Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. Ms. Murmokaite said that the Counter-Terrorism Committee, with the support of its Executive Directorate, had identified 67 States most affected by the threat of foreign terrorist fighters. She outlined the first report (S/2015/338) that analysed an initial group of 21 States, examining how they implement resolutions 1373 (2001), 1624 (2005) and 2178 (2014), the gaps they might need to address, either individually or collectively, and good practices. Ms. Murmokaite also highlighted that, according to a dedicated report on Advanced Passenger Information (S/2015/377), only 51 States globally currently utilized advanced passenger information systems. She stressed that the conclusions of the report would be used to develop detailed recommendations for the facilitation of technical assistance in the coming months. Mr. Stock stressed the importance of secure sharing of information on foreign terrorist fighters across national and regional borders, through INTERPOL, and that prompt access to that information at the frontlines was vital. He described the Organization's engagement with States in that regard and noted that identifiers of more than 4,000 foreign terrorist fighters were now available in its databases. Mr. Stock recommended that more information be shared, including domestically and across regional borders; and that international borders be strengthened in order to achieve systematic screening capacity, particularly in high-priority locations.

Council members recognized the increasingly global, complex and dynamic threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters, and discussed priority actions that must be taken to fully implement resolution 2178 (2014). They shared their own experiences, including in criminalizing activities related to foreign terrorist fighters, improving border security, collecting and sharing data pertinent to foreign terrorist fighters within and across borders, as well as other prevention, interdiction and enforcement measures with respect to foreign terrorist fighters, their recruiters and facilitators. The importance of multilateral cooperation and coordination in such efforts was also stressed. Many Council members further underlined the importance of addressing the underlying factors of radicalization, as well as the need to respect

the rule of law and human rights. While recognizing the central role of United Nations entities and the Council's own bodies, many Council members also called for greater cooperation within the United Nations and with other agencies.

On 29 May, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2015/11), which reiterated grave concern over the continuing threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters. The Council underscored the need for States to intensify those efforts and to identify and undertake priority actions, in particular those mentioned in the statement, with assistance from others, where needed, as expeditiously as possible. The presidential statement identified possible actions in this regard, such as full implementation of the obligations set out in paragraph 6 of the resolution, enforcement of relevant laws, broader use of advance passenger information to support evidence-based traveller risk assessment and screening procedures, strengthened border control and greater law enforcement cooperation, as well as greater collection and sharing of terrorist identities for screening purposes, improved international, regional and subregional cooperation, increased exchange of information with, and use of, the INTERPOL database of foreign terrorist fighters. The Council requested the 1267/1989 Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee and Counter-Terrorism Committee to hold a joint meeting on the topic, and recommended that the Office of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force develop a United Nations capacity-building implementation plan for countering the flow of foreign terrorist fighters.